**Federal judges redraw two south side legislative districts**

By [Jason Stein](http://www.jsonline.com/news/statepolitics/mailto:jstein@journalsentinel.com) of the Journal Sentinel - April 11, 2012

Federal judges on Wednesday redrew the lines of two south side legislative districts in favor of Democrats and an immigrant rights group.

In doing so, the three-member panel rejected arguments by the state on behalf of the maps drawn by Republican lawmakers last year. Last month the panel ruled that the maps for Assembly Districts 8 and 9 [violated the voting rights](http://www.jsonline.com/news/statepolitics/panel-rules-south-side-districts-must-be-redrawn-others-approved-bn4mlpo-143811306.html) of Latinos.

The lawsuit against the state was brought by a group of Democrats and the immigrant rights group Voces de la Frontera.

They said GOP legislators had violated the federal Voting Rights Act by diluting the voting power of Latinos by dividing them into two Assembly districts instead of concentrating them into one where they would have the most influence in an election.

The judges stepped in to draw the maps after the state and the plaintiffs failed to reach an agreement on how to redraw the maps to respond to last month's ruling.

"Republicans once again refused to work with others, instead submitting their own maps, which were rejected by the court," Assembly Minority Leader Peter Barca (D-Kenosha) said.

Dana Brueck, a spokeswoman for the state Department of Justice, said the agency expected to decide on whether to appeal the case by the end of the week or early next week.

"We're disappointed one of our maps wasn't chosen but not surprised," Brueck said. " . . . we're leaning toward an appeal."

Senate Republican Leader Scott Fitzgerald said in a statement that the court "has reaffirmed that the Legislature correctly apportioned 130 out of 132 Legislative districts as well as all eight congressional districts."

In its earlier ruling, the court largely upheld the maps that Republican lawmakers had drawn, though the court criticized lawmakers for the secretive process they used to draw them, saying it was not in keeping with Wisconsin's history of open government.

The judicial panel also rejected on Wednesday a request by the City of Milwaukee to fix technical errors with the maps that had created a five-person ward and a one-person ward in neighboring Assembly District 7. The court said those errors would need to be addressed either with the state elections agency, the Government Accountability Board, or in a separate court action.

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